

Message Text

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PAGE 01 EC BRU 03597 121714Z
ACTION SIL-01

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB SP
SUBJECT: NEW SPANISH TRADE UNION LAW

REF: EC BRUSSELS 3409

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED:

1. ICFTU'S SEMI-MONTHLY "INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION NEWS,"
DATED APRIL 5 BUT JUST DISTRIBUTED IN THE MAILS, CONTAINS
THE FOLLOWING LEAD ITEM TITLED "NEW SPANISH LABOUR LAW
FAILS TO SATISFY UNIONS". BEGIN TEXT.

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"THE NEW LABOUR LAW JUST PASSED BY THE SPANISH PARLIAMENT,
THE CORTES, IS CONSIDERED COMPLTELY INADQUATE BY THE
INTERNATIONAL FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS, TO WHICH THE
SPANISH UGT AND THE BASQUE STV ARE AFFILIATED, HAS
CONSTANTLY EMPHASIZED THAT THE VERTICAL, GOVERNMENT-

CONTROLLED LABOUR ORGANIZATIONS ESTABLISHED UNDER THE FRANCO DICTATORSHIP MUST BE COMPLETELY DISMANTLED. THE NEW LAW IN NO WAY MEETS THIS DEMAND. NOT ONLY ARE THE VERTICAL ORGANIZATIONS MAINTAINED, BUT THEY ARE EVEN (UNDER A LAST-MINUTE AMENDMENT APPROVED BY ULTRA-CONSERVATIVES) ENTRUSTED WITH THE TASK OF PARTICIPATING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW LAW. MOREOVER, THE LAW ATTEMPTS TO PRESCRIBE THE MANNER IN WHICH TRADE UNIONS ARE TO BE SET UP, AND THUS IMPINGES ON THE WORKERS' FREEDOM TO DECIDE THESE MATTERS FOR THEMSELVES. AS IT STANDS AT THE MOMENT, THE NEW LAW DOES NOT CORRESPOND TO THE ILO PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS ONLY RECENTLY RATIFIED BY THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT. THE ICFTU IS CONSIDERING WHETHER IT SHOULD TAKE THE MATTER UP WITH THE ILO. WHILE WELCOMING THE FACT THAT SPANISH LAW AT LAST RECOGNIZES THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE, THE UGT, THE STV AND THE ICFTU WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR FULL TRADE UNION FREEDOM IN SPAIN.

"ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY OTTO KERSTEN HAS WRITTEN TO FRANCIS BLANCHARD, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE ILO, POINTING OUT THAT SPAIN'S OBSERVANCE OF ILO NORMS ON TRADE UNION FREEDOM WILL DEPEND ON HOW THE NEW LAW IS APPLIED, AND ASKING HIM TO INTERCEDE WITH THE SPANISH AUTHORITIES."

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2. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE FROM THE TEXT CONTAINED IN REFTEL IS THE ADDITION OF LAST SENTENCE, WHICH
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INDICATES A MORE FLEXIBLE ICFTU ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NEW LAW.

3. CONTRARY TO INFORMATION PROVIDED BY ICFTU STAFFER ENZO FIRISO, THE TEXT CITED IN REFTEL (AND DRAFTED BY FRISO) WAS NOT RPT NOT THE VERSION RELEASED TO THE PRESS, ACCORDING TO ICFTU ASST GENERAL SECRETARY JOHN VANDERVEKEN. THE TRADE UNION NEWS TEXT QUOTED ABOVE IS THE OFFICIAL ICFTU POSITION.

4. FURTHER, ACCORDING TO VANDERVEKEN, THE SECRETARIAT FINALLY DECIDED AGAINST SENDING A PROTEST CABLE TO SPANISH LABOR MINISTER DE LA MATA, ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE CORTES, RATHER THAN THE GOVERNMENT, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NEW LAW. ON SEPARATE OCCASIONS BOTH FRISO AND KERSTEN CLEARLY TOLD US THAT A CABLE HAD BEEN SENT. HINTON

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